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Remarks

Independent claim 1 (and some of its dependent claims) has been amended to be consistent with other independent claims in referring to "the pre-specified message" rather than "one of the pre-specified messages". This removes any ambiguity over how a selection of the pre-specified message is made. This amendment does not raise new issues.

The Examiner continues to reject claims 1-3, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 15-17 as being anticipated by US 6,678,720 Matsumoto. Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments in the "Response to Arguments" section of the office action but remains of the view that the claims of the present application define an invention which is both novel and non-obvious having regard to the content of Matsumoto (US6678720). Applicant maintains as valid the submission presented in applicant's previous response subject to the clarifications contained in the following.

The present invention teaches a mechanism whereby an originating user can cause a pre-specified message to be sent to a specified user's destination mailbox without having to make a normal call to the owner of that mailbox. This reduces the repetitive tasks associated with using voicemail and other media types of mail of having to compose a message each time an originating user wishes to leave a message for a destination user at the destination user's mailbox. One other advantage of the present invention is that, by enabling an originating user to initiate the delivery of a pre-specified message (even with a further message appended thereto) to be sent to a destination user's mailbox without having to make a normal call to the destination user, the originating user need not risk becoming engaged in a real-time interaction (e.g. voice call) with the destination user at a time that may not be convenient, for example.

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It should be noted that a mailbox is, in essence, a device for the non-real time delivery of messages. In using a mailbox messaging service, an originating user is intentionally seeking to leave a message to be picked up, received, delivered etc to a destination user at some later point in time. This is particularly true of the present invention in which an originating user makes a conscious decision to initiate the sending of a pre-specified message rather than making a normal call to the destination user who, if then unavailable, may have arranged for normal calls to be directed to his/her mailbox.

As to what is a pre-specified message, there is no difficulty in understanding this term in the context of the present invention. A pre-specified message can be a standard message containing the originator's details and a request to be called back (page 2, lines 16/17). The pre-specified message may be recorded by the user and stored at his/her mailbox at a messaging server (page 2, lines 19/20). Thus, a pre-specified message can comprise a pre-recorded message. The use of the term "pre-programmed message" in applicant's previous response should be read as pre-specified message and any reference to the plural form should now be taken as the singular.

The focus of Matsumoto is completely different from that of the present invention. It is solving the problem of trying to enable real time communication between a chat system and other media type devices.

Matsumoto does not describe a messaging system arranged to allow a user to send a pre-specified message to a destination party mail box. Rather Matsumoto is concerned with a chat system and the problem of allowing communication with a chat system from terminals that do not support chat (such as a conventional telephone). Matsumoto does not mention destination party mail boxes despite the

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content of the abstract of this reference (message destination designation) since it clearly and unambiguously teaches that a message destination designation comprises a chat channel. A chat channel is a real-time channel which cannot reasonably be construed to comprise a destination party mailbox. Note here that the destination mailbox is implicitly associated with a specified destination user, not a channel open to a plurality of users. Note also that the text message sent to a user to notify the user of a message is sent in real-time which supports the purpose of Matsumoto of facilitating real-time communication between chat devices and other devices not supporting the chat system.

More specifically, in the system of Matsumoto a non-chat terminal such as a telephone sends, to a chat client or chat server, a voice, image or text message and an indication of a chat channel (message destination designation). It is desired to enable the members of the chat channel to access the message even though it is sent from a non-chat terminal. Thus, the message is not intended for a specified destination user's mailbox but is intended for all the participants of the chat channel to be accessed in real-time or as close to real-time that such system affords.

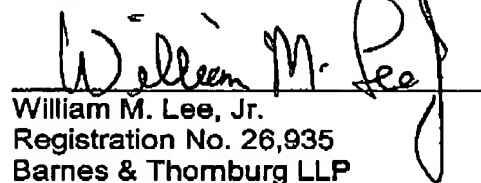
Thus, it is clear from this submission and that of applicant's previous response that Matsumoto does not teach all of the claim limitations of the claims of the present application and consequently the present invention is not anticipated by this reference.

Favorable reconsideration of the claims is therefore requested.

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December 23, 2004

Respectfully submitted,


William M. Lee, Jr.
Registration No. 26,935
Barnes & Thornburg LLP
P.O. Box 2786
Chicago, Illinois 60690-2786
(312) 214-4800
(312) 759-5646 (fax)

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